

**A service of celebration to mark the retirement of Professor Dr h. c. Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and subsequent words of greeting**

Words of greeting: Bishop Dr. Dr. h. c. Markus Dröge, Chair of the Supervisory Board of EWDE e. V.

I.

“I have boundless hope”, you once said, dear Sister Füllkrug-Weitzel, when asked where you manage to find the strength for your untiring commitment. Hope that comes from the Gospel. “God rolls away the stones from all our graves,” you said. The resurrection reveals to us that God's kingdom is already at work among us. And that is why Christians are not prepared to put up with the injustices, hostilities and inhumanity in the world we live in without challenging them. On the contrary: Christians are duty-bound to stand up for justice and human dignity. This hope is your elixir of life. And that is why you ended up in the right place at *Bread for the World*: the preamble of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development states that its work is rooted “... in the *faith* that bears witness to the world as God's creation, in the *love*, through which God reveals us as neighbour to every human being, and in the *hope* that acts with the certainty of the coming Kingdom of God.”

II.

As Chair of the Supervisory Board of the EWDE, I experienced almost half of your tenure as President of Bread for the World: the relocation from Stuttgart to Berlin; the merging of the different working areas and cultures of diakonia and development work in one organisation; the exacerbated refugee situation; and, at the end of your term of office, the corona pandemic. Through your astute vigilance, you were always able to identify and point out problems at an early stage and call for appropriate measure in response.

As President of Bread for the World, you were a powerful voice in our Church, reminding us of the desperate situation facing the poorest people throughout the world. In your farewell interview to our Church newspaper you said, “I am amazed how often in this country people whinge and complain, apparently unaware of how incredibly well-off we are here, how privileged we are.” In this role as admonisher, one is per se an awkward partner. But because it was, and still is, possible to sense that the issue, itself, is important to you and that this issue is to be taken seriously, working with you has always been target-oriented and fair. Your holy impatience was good for me when it came to standing up fearlessly to opinions and developments that were threatening human dignity and the pursuit of justice.

I will never forget our trip to southern Turkey in 2016, where we looked at the local work with Syrian refugees and where I became acquainted with Bread for the World's partner organisations. I witnessed, at first hand, just how natural it is for you establish contact with everyone you encounter.

III.

Dear Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, during your time in office, you made various attempts to take some time out for reflection. But it never really worked out. Something unexpected always seemed to come up. And even now, as you enter a new phase in your life, you already have numerous tasks lined up and new requests for working involvement – in committees, commissions and teaching assignments. Anyone with an international reputation such as yours for development work and such an extensive network, is unlikely to be granted the opportunity to grow roses. Nevertheless, I hope you enjoy your newfound autonomy in living your own life.

On behalf of the Supervisory Board of the EWDE, but also on behalf of the EKBO (Evangelical Church in Berlin, Brandenburg and Silesian Upper Lusatia), of which you are an ordained pastor, I thank you for your extraordinary commitment and wish you God's blessings for the new phase of your life.